



## **America's Voices on Border Security**

### ***Border Sheriff Discusses the Impact of Illegal Immigration on Local Law Enforcement and National Security***

*"The truth is that the Southern border is the weak link in our national security."*

-- Leo Samaniego, Sheriff  
El Paso County, Texas

**August 17, 2006**

At a House Judiciary Committee hearing in El Paso, Texas today, local and federal experts testified about illegal immigration's impact on border towns. Among the witnesses was Sheriff Leo Samaniego of El Paso County, who serves as Chairman of the Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition. Sheriff Samaniego testified about the impact of illegal immigration on the communities in his area, and how weak border security is harmful to our national security. Excerpts from his prepared testimony are below:

#### **Sheriff Leo Samaniego, El Paso County, Texas** **Chairman, Texas Border Sheriff's Coalition**

"As Law Enforcement officers on the border with Mexico, our primary concern is the welfare and safety of our citizens and our nation. We, the Border Sheriff's Coalition, have done everything possible to bring awareness to the leaders of our state and our nation. The terrorism threat to our country is very real, it is unfortunate that most Americans have already forgotten the fear, terror and anger we experienced on September 11, 2001. God forbid that we experience another day like that, but if we do, I do not want anyone pointing a finger at me and telling me I did not do my job. The truth is that the Southern border is the weak link in our national security."

“Intelligence indicates that terrorist organizations are increasingly probing the U.S./Mexico border..... The large international border creates tremendous smuggling opportunities for terrorists and is fertile ground for recruitment and development of support networks for terrorist organizations. The Mexican drug trafficking and human smuggling organizations use their knowledge of the border to assist terrorist cell members in their attempts to exploit the United States.”

“The well organized flow of illegal immigrants coming across our border must be stopped. Border control must be a priority. What do we do with the eleven or more millions already here can wait until a logical & reasonable solution can be formulated. Amnesty only fuels the desire of millions more to come in illegally and hope that this practice will be repeated.”

“If illicit organizations can bring in tons of narcotics through this region and work a distribution network that spans the entire country, then they can bring in the resources for terrorism as well. If illegal aliens can be smuggled through here in truck loads, then terrorist organizations can also covertly smuggle the people to carry out their plans. On the Southwest border, the same organizations involved in smuggling drugs have also been found to smuggle illegal aliens.”

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